Stampe, Mayor.

Jovis xiv. die April' 1692. *Annoq; Regis & Rigine* Williel' & Mariæ, Angliæ, &c. *quarto.*

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GOODFELLOW.

Devotion & Charity:

IN A

DISCOURSE

Before the Right Honourable the

Lord Mayor,

The Honourable the

COURT of ALDERMEN,

WITH THE

Governours of the HOSPITALS

OF THE

CITY of *LONDON*,

On *Wedneſday* in *Eaſter* Week, at St. *Bridget's* Church, being the 30*th.* of *March*, 1692.

By *RICHARD LUCAS*, D.D.
Vicar of St. *Stephen's Coleman-ſtreet.*

LONDON:
Printed for *Samuel Smith*, at the *Prince's Arms* in *Paul's* Church-yard, 1692.

To the Right Honourable Sir *Thomas Stampe*, Kt. Lord Mayor, and the Court of Aldermen.

My Lord,

IN Conformity to Your Lordſhip's Commands, I here preſent You with this Sermon, *which I heartily pray may ſerve the Intereſt of* Charity *in this* City ; *which was the only Motive I had before me in the Compoſing it. I am,*

My Lord,
Your Lordſhip's
moſt humble Servant,

RICHARD LUCAS.

DEVOTION AND CHARITY, &c.

Acts X. 4.

Thy Prayers and thine Alms are come up for a Memorial before God.

SOme obſerving what Bloud and Ruine, what Luxury and Avarice fills almoſt all places in Chriſtendom, have been ſometimes tempted to queſtion, whether Chriſtianity had wrought any effect in the World anſwerable to thoſe glorious Elogies beſtowed upon it. *The Power of God*, Rom. 1. 16. *And the Wiſdom of God*, Epheſ. 1. 8. 'Tis true indeed, Idolatry is well nigh baniſhed the World, at leaſt the reformed World: But ſince Men ſacrifice (though not to *Baal* or *Moloch*) to Ambition and Cruelty, (though

(though not to *Aſhtaroth* and *Mammon* yet) to Luſt and Covetouſneſs, they are to be judged not to have quitted but exchanged their Idols: 'Tis true, there are vaſt numbers abroad and at home, who dedicate themſelves to the Service of the now known God; among theſe we may find Religion abroad (if it be to be found) here in the pompous Ceremonies, or Proceſſions and Feſtivals, there in the Antick habits and Self-denying dreſſes of Monks and Nuns: At home in Volumes of Controverſies and Superſtitious Separations. But ſince 'tis apparent how much Evil the one and the other ſerved to diſguiſe, and how little good they have been able to produce; if this were all the Fruits of Chriſtian Religion, I ſhould be yet to ſeek what it had brought forth anſwerable to the glorious Prophecies relating to it, or to the great Characters of it.

But in this Aſſembly, and the Occaſion of it, I meet with a very ſatisfactory Anſwer to this Objection, againſt the Vertue and Efficacy of the Chriſtian Religion; here we may behold one, and that no ſpecious but true and natural Off-ſpring of the Chriſtian Faith, and ſuch a one as doth abundantly vindicate the Glory and Reputation of it: I mean Chari-

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ty ; Such a Charity, as for the Largeneſs of its Bounty and the Prudence of its Regulation, may become your Wealth and Grandeur ; I may add the Majeſty of its Founders, and the Wiſdom and Piety of its Governours ; a Charity which in one word may become the Excellence and the Power of the Chriſtian Faith.

That this Charity ſo happily begun, ſo piouſly and proſperouſly conducted hitherto, may not only be preſerved but daily encreaſed is the End and Buſineſs of this Solemnity ; to which, that I may contribute what I can, I ſhall propoſe to your Imitation an example which for you to equal can be no diſparagement, becauſe approved of God and Angels. To outdo will be a great Honour and Advantage, but to fall ſhort of it, a Reproach. and Scandal; great and wealthy Citizens of the beſt governed City by a *Roman*, by a Souldier, Chriſtians by a Pagan, or at beſt but a Proſelyte of Judaiſm out done in Devotion and Charity; It muſt not be, no I hope better things of you that accompany your Salvation, the Honour and Reputation of our Religion , and the Proſperity and Glory of this great and opulent City ; for I have reaſon to expect that nothing elſe will be the reward of a pious and generous

Charity, when I conſider with what a glorious Applauſe, with what miraculous favour it was crowned in *Cornelius*; An Angel being diſpatched from Heaven to let him know how welcome his Sacrifices were there, and to what Glory and Immortality they had recommended him: *Thy Prayers and thine Alms*, &c. In theſe Words we have two parts, *Cornelius* his Character, and God's Approbation: 1*ſt*, *Cornelius* his Character conſiſting of two eminent Vertues, Devotion and Charity, *Thy Prayers and thine Alms*: 2*dly*, God's Approbation, *are come up for a Memorial before God*: 1*ſt*, Of his Devotion: Devotion is an affection of Mind derived from the Contemplation of the lovely Perfections of God, from a lively conſideration of his bounty and goodneſs towards us, and a juſt ſenſe of our dependance upon him: It expreſſes it ſelf in the Perfumes of Praiſe, and Thankſgiving, the Flames of Love, the Pantings and Breathings of Deſire, the Excellencies of Faith, and Religious dependence, and the Importunities of humble Fears, the Vigour and Activity of an unfeigned Zeal and growing Hope: In this grace or rather eminence or height of Religious perfection *Cornelius* excelled: *He was a devout Man, one that feared God with all his houſe, and prayed to God always*, Verſ. 2. There are two

two things so considerable in this Character, that though I hasten to the main Design, yet I cannot pass them without making some remark upon them: *He prayed to God always.* This was true Devotion, as steady and constant as it was sincere and fervent; the effect not of a heated Imagination, or a short-liv'd Passion, but of well-rooted Principles, and of a purified and exalted Mind: The next thing remarkable is, *He feared God with all his house*: How lovely, how charming is a bright Example; and how active and invincible is a devout Zeal of God? 'twas it seems in *Cornelius* like light that could not be confined, but breaking out shed a vital Influence round about it: But to find now all this in a Pagan, 'tis not a little surprizing: Devotion clad in Steel, hands armed with Instruments of Death lifted up continually in Prayers; Valour govern'd and supported by the humble fear of an invisible Power; A devout Souldier a devout *Roman*; I read of the Apostles being *continually in the Temple blessing and praising God*, Luke 24. But this was a Man of a different Light and Profession to. I read of *Moses* and *Joshuah* whose Devotion was equal to their valour, who owed their victories no less to their Prayers then Arms, but this was owing to extraordinary Inspirations and miraculous

culous Appearances of God, what was it then that produced such a Devotion in *Cornelius*, his command was mean that is plain; as to his Birth and Fortune, whatever it was, it was not considerable enough to be recorded. As to his Religion, That he was a Pagan is plain, and Interpreters seem to me rather to take it for granted then proved that he was a Proselyte of the Gates: The Vision of St. *Peter*, and the Resentment which the Christians of the Circumcision expres'd of his conversing with him, *Acts* 11. 3. give no great countenance to it, but be it so, all that we can infer from hence or from any other ground amounts to thus much; that he was instructed in a natural Religion, believed one God the maker of Heaven and Earth, and lookt upon him as the Rewarder of all those that diligently seek him: This was the Creed that produced the wonderful Fruits in the Text; and now give me leave to put you in mind how reasonable it is you should exceed, at least equal this Man in your Devotion, for whether Religion be the result of gratitude or hope, your both Obligations and Expectations from the God of Heaven are infinitely above his: Your Wealth and Dignity does much exceed that of a *Centurion*, a Commander of a hundred Men, and that gained not by your Bloud and Hazard

Hazard, but by the eaſie and delightful Arts of Peace: But what is more, you are as much above him in Spiritual as in Temporal Mercies; the Love of God to mankind in giving his Son to die for them was unknown to him, but revealed, demonſtrated, and inculcated to you, whatever Grace he might enjoy, you might much more; for though God be the God not only of the *Jew* once, and Chriſtian now, but alſo of the *Gentile*, none doubt but that the meaſure of Goſpel-Grace much exceeds what ever God vouchſafed either *Jew* or *Pagan*. Laſtly, what opinion *Cornelius* had of a Life to come we know not, becauſe we cannot tell what proofs or evidences of it were vouchſafed him, but we are ſure they could not be as clear nor as ſtrong as thoſe you enjoy, who behold Life and Immortality brought to light through the Goſpel, and to whom God has given an aſſurance of a Judgment to come, by the Reſurrection of Jeſus from the dead; it might therefore be reaſonably expected, that your Devotion ſhould as much exceed his as your Obligations and your Hopes do; and yet if it do but equal it, what Bleſſings will you not procure to your ſelves and to this City? What Judgments may not a fervent and united Devotion of ſo many avert from our dear Country? What Mercies may

may it not obtain for it? What influence would not ſo many illuſtrious Examples have upon the Nation? to what degree might this not advance a general Reformation? Ah! were but you your ſelves inflamed with a devout Love, how ſoon would this fire catch the breaſt of your Families, and from thence paſs into the Neighbourhood round about, and ſo Religion be diffus'd and tranſmitted from this City to all the reſt of the Nation, like vital heat and warmth from the Heart into all the parts of the Body. But by this time I believe you begin to wonder what I mean by ſtopping ſo long upon Devotion, e're I enter upon the great Subject of the Day, that is Charity; I had theſe two Reaſons to do ſo, *1ſt.* Becauſe Devotion is an excellent Introduction to Charity, there is a cloſe connexion and dependance between both: They both proceed from a juſt Senſe of what we receive from and owe to God, and are proper teſtimonies of our gratitude to him: By Devotion, we ſacrifice our ſelves, by Charity our ſubſtance to God; and it cannot reaſonably be imagin'd, that he who has given himſelf to God, ſhould deny him a Portion of the Fruits of his Flocks and Herds: Therefore St. *John* argued cloſely, when he concluded that breaſt to be deſtitute of the Love of God, which was ſo of

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compaſſion for his Neighbour : *Who ſo hath this World's Goods, and ſeeth his Brother has need, and ſhutteth up his bowels of compaſſion from him, how dwelleth the Love of God in him ?* 1 Joh. 3. 17.

2*dly*, Becauſe I would have the Charity I ſhall perſwade you to, no Counterfeit or Adulterate, but a true Chriſtian Vertue, I would not have it want that worth and value which Religion muſt ſtamp upon it : I muſt confeſs rather than the Tears of Orphans ſhould not be wiped off; rather than the hungry and the naked ſhould not be fed and cloath'd; rather than the groans and cries of the diſtreſſed ſhould not be calm'd, I ſhould be content, that generoſity or good nature, nay that Vanity and Oſtentation ſhould ſpur Men on to bounty and liberality ; I would rather the moſt excellent Works ſhould be owing to the very worſt of Principles, even to Ambition and Faction, than the needy and the miſerable ſhould be abandoned : but yet I cannot be of the Opinion of ſome St. *Auſtin* takes notice of, who thought their Alms might protect their ſins, and their Charity towards Man ſhelter their impiety towards God, even though they perſiſted in it. I know very well that Charity without Devotion, is like bounty without

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charity, of which St. *Paul* ſays, 1 *Cor.* 13. 3. *Though I beſtow all my Goods to feed the Poor, and have not Charity, it profiteth me nothing*:

This was another reaſon why I have ſaid ſomething of Devotion, It was out of a Zeal I had, that no Man's Charity might ever loſe its reward; that no Man's Alms might prove as fruitleſs to him, as that Wealth and Treaſure which fooliſh *Indians* beſtow upon the Dead, and bury in their Graves, but that your Charity may be ſuch as that of *Cornelius*, whoſe memorial may go up before God, and procure you Angels for your attendants, and Heaven for your reward.

This is that I am now to ſpeak to.

2*dly*, The ſecond part of *Cornelius* his Character is Charity, *Thine Alms*: And here 'tis obſervable, that as Devotion ſo Charity to was at its height in him that he prayed always, ſo is it ſaid of him to that he gave much Alms; much not only with reſpect to his rank and fortune, or with reſpect to his Religion, being at moſt but a Proſelyte of the Gates, but much even conſidered in it ſelf, for it is ſaid he gave much Alms to the People, which muſt imply an enlarg'd generous bounty; to give Alms might have argued a Senſe of Religion, but to give much, zeal and fervency; to give Alms might

might have argued in him Humanity and the Tenderneſs of Nature; but to give much Alms a heavenly Diſpoſition and greatneſs of Mind, made ſo by Faith: Something he might have done for Reputation, ſomething out of compliance and decency, but to give much Alms in a Perſon of his circumſtances was an unqueſtionable proof of Sincerity and Perfection too: I will not go about to compare this *Roman* with *Abraham* the Friend of God, or *David* the Man after God's own Heart, leaſt you ſhould think him raiſed above your Imitation, and ſo I ſhould beget in you not a Deſire but a Deſpair of equalling him: No, I will chuſe rather to conſider. *1ſt.* By what Grace. *2dly*, By what Principles he was moved and acted, that the ſame or a higher may move you, or leave you inexcuſable: *1ſt.* If we enquire after the Grace vouchſafed *Cornelius*, I doubt not to affirm that he was aſſiſted by the Holy Spirit. For though he were a Gentile in the Fleſh, and uncircumciſed, and in that reſpect, though not in regard to his Works, an Alien from the Commonwealth of *Iſrael*, and a Stranger from the Covenants of Promiſe, yet was he not without God, nor without Hope in the World: God is the God of the *Gentile* as well as of the *Jew*, and St. *Paul* has taught us: *Rom.* 2. 28, 29.

That a Conformity to the Law of Nature, that is; of right Reason, was that which did render the Gentile a Jew inwardly, and did constitute that circumcision, which is of the Heart in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose praise is not of Men but of God: And since we know that the Holy Spirit is the Spring and Source of Sanctification, I dare not derive it in *Cornelius* from any other Principles; but must attribute his Devotion and Charity to the same Spirit, to which I would that of *Abraham* before Circumcision, or that of *Job* who was no less a Stranger then *Cornelius* from the *Jewish* Covenant; What needs farther Arguments, has not God himself told us that he had sanctified him: *V.* 15. *What God hath cleansed that call not thou common.* But I am more sollicitous in this Matter than my design requires, for if we should suppose *Cornelius* to have been acted by no Supernatural principle, then what a shame and scandal will it be to us, if Christianity cannot carry us as far Paganism did him, if the concurring and co-operating Grace of God, cannot raise our Charity to that pitch which Reason did his? But if universal Grace were the Principles and Origen of these Vertues in *Cornelius*, then can we have no excuse for any degrees of Uncharitableness; for this seems as general and as ready a one as Reason, and no *Man* forfeits the one but by abusing and violating

ting the other: But if indeed we think the Vertue of this Centurion owing to ſpecial Grace, and that working in ſuch a manner, that he that has it, can never fall ſhort, and he that wants it, never come up to his Vertue: This I confeſs, would furniſh any Man with an excuſe for Impiety and Inhumanity; but becauſe it would do ſo, this muſt be an erroneous and falſe Opinion, but finally let the Grace that moved *Cornelius* be what it will, we have, or we may have the ſame, or a much greater; for we are within that Covenant which contains the Diſpenſation of the Riches of the Divine Grace; and 'tis one of the great and precious Promiſes of the Goſpel, *If we ask we ſhall receive, if we ſeek we ſhall find, if we knock it ſhall be opened to us*, that is, as appears from the *Verſe* following, *we ſhall have the Holy Spirit given us.*

Our next Inquiry muſt be what the Principles were which inſpired *Cornelius* with ſuch a boundleſs Charity, and here I find many. For the *Gentiles* ſometimes lookt upon Charity as an Office of Humanity, and thought him a Stranger to Human Nature, and an Enemy to Human Society, whoſe breaſt was not touch'd with Tenderneſs and Compaſſion for the Miſeries and Diſtreſſes of thoſe who were partakers of the ſame Nature, and Members of the

ſame Body politick, ſometimes they lookt upon it as ſomething Lovely and full of Honour, and I do not find that any thing raiſed the Reputation of a *Roman* higher than either a Contempt of Wealth, or Beneficence and Liberality. Whence *Saluſt* ſeems to equal the Glory of *Cæſar*'s Bounty to that of *Cato*'s Vertue and Severity; ſometimes again they lookt upon Charity as an act of Religion, a Sacrifice more acceptable to God than the Fat of Lambs, or the Bloud of Bulls. And that for two Reaſons: 1*ſt*. Becauſe it was the nobleſt Imitation of God, who being himſelf the Univerſal Patron, and Benefactor of *Mankind*; they did reaſonably infer that there was no worſhip more grateful to him than Beneficence and Liberality.

2*dly*, Becauſe they did believe Mankind the Off-ſpring of the Family of God, and conſequently that the Poor being entitled as well as the Rich to his Fatherly Love, they concluded, that nothing could be more natural or reaſonable than to be kind to them out of Honour and Gratitude to him. And after all this, 'tis no wonder if they expected that the Divine Providence ſhould puniſh that Uncharitableneſs, which implied Inhumanity and Irreligion, Barbarity towards Man and Ingratitude towards God, and reward that Charity which had a Value and Dignity ſtamped upon it by the quite contrary

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Affections, hence it is that we find *Job* reflecting on his good Deeds with an unſpeakable Satisfaction, and eſtabliſhing upon them as on a firm Foundation fair and flouriſhing Hopes, *Job* 29. 13.

The Bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh came upon me, and I cauſed the Widows heart to ſing for Joy: And then I ſaid, *v.* 18. *I ſhall die in my Neſt, and I ſhall multiply my Days as the Sand*, and that in that ſtate of Opulency and Honour, no doubt, which he there deſcribes, *v.* 19, 20. *My Root was ſpread out by the Waters, and the Dew lay all night upon my Branch. My Glory was freſh in me, and my Bow was renewed in my hand*: And hence it was, that when *Job* was oppreſſed and overwhelmed by Calamities, *Eliphaz* knew not what to impute them to, more probably then to Uncharitableneſs: *Job* 22. 7. *Thou haſt not given Water to the Weary to drink, and thou haſt withholden Bread from the Hungry.* This and all the reſt I could confirm by full and numerous Teſtimonies from Heathen Writers (if I thought it neceſſary) theſe Notions of the Heathens derived from evident Light of Nature, as they do evince the Obligations to Charity Univerſal and Indiſpenſable, ſo do they demonſtrate the Guilt of Uncharitableneſs to be very great and provoking, the Evidence, Neceſſity and excellent

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Tendency of any Law; as they beſpeak the Importance of it, ſo do they wonderfully aggravate the Violation of it, all which ſuggeſt to us a Truth, which I doubt is not ſo well conſidered as it ought; namely, that though our Alms muſt be voluntary and free-will Offerings; yet are we bound by the ſtrongeſt Ties to make ſuch; nothing leſs than Damnation being the Puniſhment of ſuch who do not make theſe Oblations freely and cheerfully: For we cannot forget, I am ſure we never ought, that *Matth.* 25. 42. The Sentence, *Go ye Curſed into everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels*: Was pronounced on thoſe who had not ſuccoured the Miſerable; *I was an hungry and ye gave me no meat, I was thirſty and ye gave me no drink: I was a ſtranger and ye took me not in; naked and ye cloathed me not: ſick and in priſon and ye viſited me not*: What? ſhall he that does not feed the Hungry be as ſurely damned as he that robs the rich Orphan or Widow; he that does not cloath the Naked, as he that ſtrips and fleeces his Neighbour by fraud or violence, he that does not hoſpitably receive the Stranger as he that circumvents him perfidiouſly, or bears him down by his power or intereſt, he that does not viſit the Impriſoned as he that caſts him wrongfully in there, in a word

word, Is the ſame Hell prepared for Uncharitableneſs, for the meer denial of Relief and Succour, that is for Oppreſſion and Injuſtice? Will the ſame Vengeance, the ſame everlaſting Vengeance purſue thoſe that abandon the Miſerable, which will purſue thoſe that make Men ſo? Good God! Do the Rich and Covetous believe this to be Goſpel? Do thoſe wretched Creatures, who ſink under the Weight and Burthen of their Fortunes, and yet ſuffer others to periſh for want of ſome Fragments and Parings of it, do theſe believe this to be the Word of God? it cannot be.

Now that we have ſeen what Motives wrought upon *Cornelius* as a Pagan, under the Diſpenſation of natural Religion, need I conſider him as a Proſelyte of the Gates, and examine what farther Inducements to Charity he might meet with in the Law and the Prophets, with which we may preſume him not unacquainted; I think it needs not, thus much only may be ſaid, that the Law of God under Judaiſm fortified the Law of Nature, and Revelation added Light and Strength to Reaſon; and the Suffrages of *Moſes* and the Prophets gave a New Authority to the Gentle Lawgivers and Philoſophers: I cannot find that Judaiſm added any new Motive to Charity, which

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our Centurion might not have been acquainted with before; but this I may ſay, that it could not but give him a great deal of Light as to the Meaſures and Degrees of it: For though it be notorious that the *Pythagorean* Charity came up for a little while even to a Community of Goods, and higher it could not grow; yet this was a rare Caſe, and made neither any ſtrong nor general Impreſſion upon the Minds of the Pagan World: The ſame thing was practiced by the *Eſſens* among the *Jews*, but not as a Principle of the Jewiſh Religion, but a particular Tenet of their own Sect or Inſtitution, thus far indeed the Moſaick Law did not advance, but yet it made very plentiful Proviſions for the Poor: God when he gave the Land of *Canaan* in poſſeſſion, reſerved to himſelf as the great Lord and Proprietor, ſome certain Acknowledgements or quit Rents, to be paid him in the Perſons of the Poor, ſuch were the gleanings of the Vintage, and of the Fields and Tithes of the third Year, the Year of releaſe, *&c.* and beſides this, he did forbid Uſury as repugnant to Charity; for generally none borrowed, but ſuch as were forc'd to it by their Neceſſities and Wants; and therefore were to be reliev'd by Alms, not oppreſſed by Uſury: He commanded to lend, and to give,

give, and that chearfully and bountifully, according to the Exigencies and Needs of a Brother, and all this under the Sanctions of the ſevereſt Curſes, or greateſt Bleſſings. I might alledge innumerable places both out of the Law and the Prophets, to confirm and illuſtrate all this, but I'll content my ſelf with one containing an Injunction of voluntary Charity, *Deut.* 15. 7. *If there be among you a poor Man of one of thy Brethren within any of thy Gates in thy Land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou ſhalt not harden thine heart, nor ſhut thy hand from thy poor Brother, but thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto him; and ſhalt ſurely lend him ſufficient for his need in that which he wanteth, beware that there be not a thought in thy wicked heart; ſaying, The Seventh Year, the Year of releaſe is at hand, and thy Eye be evil againſt thy poor Brother and thou giveſt him nothing, and he cry unto the Lord againſt thee, and it be a ſin unto thee; thou ſhalt ſurely give him, and thine heart ſhall not be grieved when thou giveſt unto him, becauſe that for this thing the Lord thy God ſhall bleſs thee in all thy Works, and in all that thou putteſt thine hand unto; for the Poor ſhall never ceaſe out of the Land: therefore I command thee, ſaying, thou ſhalt open thine hand wide unto thy Brother, to the Poor and to the Needy in thy Land*; and this was to be extended alſo to the Stranger according to *Levit.* 25. 35. *And if thy Brother be waxen poor and*

fallen into decay with thee, then thou ſhalt relieve him, yea though he be Stranger or a Sojourner that he may live with thee: This being the Spirit of Judaiſm in reference to the Point before us, we may rationally conceive that the Precepts and Examples of the Old Teſtament added new ſtrength and force to thoſe Motives to Charity, with which the Light of Nature had furniſhed *Cornelius:* But I'll purſue this enquiry no further; whatever were the Inducements, whatever the Motives to *Cornelius* his liberality, he has been the occaſion of furniſhing us with ſuch a one, that nothing can reſiſt but rank infidelity: For is it poſſible for that Man to deny Alms or give them with a ſparing Hand, and a grudging Mind, who believes that *Cornelius*'s were rewarded after ſuch an extraordinary manner, by miraculous Demonſtrations of God's Favour, by the Embaſſy of an Angel, by the Attendance of the chief of the Apoſtles, nay by the Deſcent and Reſidence of the Holy Ghoſt upon him and his Family and Friends, and not the Revelation only but aſſurance of a glorious Eternity: He I ſay that believes this, unleſs he believes that the Charity of a Chriſtian is leſs acceptable to God than that of a Pagan, cannot I think chuſe but thirſt after opportunities of Charity, and take as much pleaſure in ſcattering as ever he did in gathering, in doing good as ever he did in growing rich: Let us therefore conſider,

The

The *ſecond* thing contained in my Text, that is, God's Approbation of *Cornelius* his Deportment, or the Influence of Prayers and Alms, *They are come up for a Memorial before God*: And now I will confine my Thoughts no longer to *Cornelius*, this being an inſeperable effect of a pious Charity, that it aſcends up for a Memorial before God; the meaning of which is, not only that God beholds and obſerves a pious Charity, but that he beholds and obſerves it with Complacency and Satisfaction, nor this only, but alſo that he remembers it for ever, and will reward it with Bleſſings becoming the Munificence and Majeſty of God, of a Righteous and Good God? What an Incouragement is this to you who convey your Alms ſecretly into the Treaſury of God? that Cloud which your Humility and Modeſty ſcatters about it, adds a new Grace and Luſtre to it: *And your Heavenly Father who ſees in ſecret ſhall reward you openly*, Mat. 6. 5. What an Encouragement is this to you whoſe good Works are ſo Eminent that they cannot chuſe but glitter and ſhine in the Eyes of the World? (I hope there are ſome ſuch here) that you erect your ſelves not only Monuments before *Men*, this were a poor matter, but before *God* Monuments more glorious than Statues, and Triumphal Arches, or any whatſoever crouching Slavery or mercenary Flattery can raiſe, your Deeds ſhall ſtand regiſter-

ed in the Book of Life, which infinitely outlaſts the Book of Fame ; nay they ſhall be engraven in the very Memory of God, where neither Time nor Eternity ſhall be ever able to efface them.

Laſtly, What an Encouragement is this to you, who by a yearly Supply feed that Stream of Bounty in the Hoſpitals, which would otherwiſe ſoon grow dry, and be exhauſted, being overcharged with numbers of the Miſerable, and liable, as you have heard, to Fires and other ſad Accidents? Our Alms will certainly go up as a Memorial before God : The Angels of theſe little Ones, who always behold the Face of God while they give an account of their Charge will do ſo of your Charity too ; the Bleſſings and Praiſes of ſuch as are delivered from Miſery while they celebrate the Divine Goodneſs put him in mind of yours too ; for you act what he inſpires ; you imitate in your little Sphere that Divine Bounty that feeds the World, and pities and ſuccours the Wants and Miſeries of it. I'll leave you to imagine with what ſatisfaction God muſt behold Works of this nature, for Alms to go up as a Memorial before God, does not import meerly that they are known to God, or that he beholds them, for ſo he does all the Works of Art and Nature, but that he beholds them with a peculiar Complacency and Delight ; and indeed ſince he who dwelleth in Heaven will humble himſelf to behold what is done upon

upon Earth, what is there that can more juſtly merit his regard, than theſe ſtanding Monuments of Charity, for what is there upon Earth more glorious, more great than theſe kind of Works, wherein Wiſdom and Piety, Vigilance and Charity, Humility and Zeal meet in all their Beauty and Luſtre? what is more magnificent than the Bounty? what more taking than the Order of theſe Foundations? God that walked among the Trees of the Garden in *Paradice*, *Gen.* 3. may be reaſonably ſuppoſed to vouchſafe his Preſence as readily here amongſt theſe Monuments of a pious Charity: Here, where Alms ſowed, as it were and planted by excellent Perſons deceaſed, and watered by the living to grow up and multiply into all the Fruits that are neceſſary to relieve the Wants or cure the Diſeaſes of the Miſerable; here, where Charity, like the great River of *Paradice* divides its ſelf into various Streams, and leaves no part of our *Eden* perfectly barren and miſerable. For here the Bounty of Earth like that of Heaven, when it rained down *Manna*, is fitted to every taſte, to all the Neceſſities of his Creatures: Here the Diſeaſes of the Body, there the Vices of the Mind, find a Cure; here Poverty finds Relief, and Youth an excellent Education, ſuch an Education as may enable them to requite the Charity of their Country, by being many of them Bleſſings and Ornaments of it: Can any one doubt

doubt now whether God beholds theſe Works with delight? or if he do ſo, whether he will not reward them with all thoſe Bleſſings which are the natural effects of a Divine Favour? Here I might plunge my ſelf in a vaſt Ocean of Matter, I might even looſe my ſelf in that crowd of Mercies with which God crowns Charity; How almoſt innumerable, how great and magnificent are the Promiſes of God made to this Vertue: Promiſes Temporal and Promiſes Spiritual, I will cull out two or three from the vaſt ſtore of the Old and New Teſtament. Iſa. 58. 10, 11. *If thou draw out thy Soul unto the hungry and ſatisfie the afflicted Soul, then ſhall thy light riſe in obſcurity, and thy darkneſs be as the noon day, and the Lord ſhall be thy reward, and guide thee continually, and ſatisfie thy Soul in drought, and make fat thy bones, and thou ſhalt be like a watered Garden, and like a Spring whoſe waters never fail*: And *Proverbs* 3. *Honour the Lord with thy ſubſtance and with the firſt fruits of thine encreaſe, ſo ſhall thy barns be filled with plenty, thy preſſes ſhall burſt out with new wine*: So ſaith our Bleſſed Lord, *Mat.* 6, 19. 20. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon Earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and ſteal, but rather lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt do corrupt, nor can Thieves break through and ſteal*: But what can be added to what St. *Paul* teaches

teaches us: 1 *Tim.* 6. or our Saviour, *Mat.* 25. who make eternal Life the Reward of Charity; what comfort muſt theſe Promiſes give us in theſe times of War and Danger, 'tis a Reflection full of delight, that this City has ſo often been the Sanctuary and Refuge of the Miſerable and Needy, that it is a never-failing Spring of Bounty and Liberality; and I hope will never grow weary of being ſo; when I think on this, I cannot but perſwade my ſelf, that the Prayers and Praiſes of thoſe vaſt numbers that have been, and are yearly relieved and ſuccoured by her, will drown the Cry of that Wickedneſs and Impiety, which cannot be denied to be in her too: That the Zeal a great many expreſs for promoting good Works amongſt us, will make an Attonement for that Looſeneſs and Atheiſm which reigns amongſt us too. In a word, when I call to mind that ten righteous Perſons would have reſcued *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* from deſtruction, I have no reaſon to doubt but that the Righteouſneſs, the Mercy and the Bounty of ſo many thouſands I hope in this City, will render it not only ſafe, but always rich and powerful enough to be the Sanctuary of its diſtreſſed Friends, and the Envy and Terror of its Enemies: And as Charity is a publick Comfort at this day, ſo what conſolation muſt it fill *the Minds* of charitable *Men* with, in the day of ſickneſs and death? Oh! how pleaſant will be your reflection

then

then on those works to which eternal Life you know is promised? Oh! what a Satisfaction must it be to you then, when you are bidding adieu to this World, that you have laid up your treasure in Heaven, made a good provision for the time to come, and furnished our Lord and *Master* with Arguments enough for your Absolution and Justification in the great Day of Judgment? I have nothing more to add, but to put you in mind, that the Motives in the Old and New Testament to Charity are such, that nothing can blunt the force of them, but what will certainly damn the *Man* that is guilty of it; namely Infidelity and Luxury none whom God has enabled to do good and to communicate (and the number of these blessed be God is very great in this City) will refuse to do so, but such who either have no faith for the Promises of God made to Alms, or such whose indulgence to Pride and vanity, riot and excess, leaves no room for Mercy or Liberality to the distressed. Ah! I wonder not, if Christ be as deaf to their cries in the Day of Judgment, as they are now to their poor Brethern in the day of their Calamity; if he send them away with a *depart ye Cursed*, who send away their afflicted Brethren, naked and destitute, abandoning shall I say or condemning them to lasting misery, with a scornful look and a relentless heart; Ah! *may God of his infinite Mercy deliver every one that hears me this day from this Guilt and from this Sentence.*

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